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THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

SPECIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION

MISSION: Prepare Report and Recommendations on Special Services Organization.

The General Board was established by General Orders 128, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, US Army, dated 17 June 1945, as amended by General Orders 182, dated 7 August 1945, and General Orders 312 dated 20 November 1945, Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, to prepare a factual analysis of the strategy, tactics, and administration employed by the United States forces in the European Theater.

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UNITED STATES FORCES, EUROPEAN THEATER  
APO 408

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SPECIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION

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## SPECIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1FOREWORD

1. General. Special Services, as originally established, both in the War Department, and in the European Theater of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA), included all activities and operations now included in the separate special staff sections of Special Services and the Information and Education Division. Any references in this study to circulars, directives, and memoranda will refer to such parts as pertain to special services activities.
2. In the preparation of this study, every effort has been made, through conferences and questionnaires, to ascertain the views and opinions of all available personnel who had extensive experience in special services during the European campaign.
3. Mission. The mission of Special Services, ETOUSA, and of the special services officers, are as set forth in ETOUSA, SOP #27, 4 June 1944, and in paragraph 39 3/4, FM 101-5 (Change 3), 27 July 1942. Complete information on basic morale policies, factors affecting morale, and recreation and welfare are included in LMR 1-10, 5 March 1945.
4. Importance of Morale. Morale underlies all aspects of military life. It is born of just and fair treatment, thorough training, pride in achievement, and pride in self, organization and country. The establishment and maintenance of good morale, and the prompt elimination at their inception of all conditions tending to produce bad morale constitute a primary function of command.
5. Morale is a command function, and as such, cannot be delegated. The special services officer is expected to advise and assist the commander on factors affecting the morale of the command, and suggest means of building and maintaining high morale. Good commanders recognize that unless a high standard of morale is maintained in their unit, military training and material can only partially succeed in making a fighting soldier. Many factors affect morale, but this study is only concerned with recreation and welfare activities, insofar as they are the responsibility of special services.

SECTION 2ORGANIZATION

6. War Department Morale Agencies. It is necessary in the preparation of this study to include a brief summary of the background and details of agencies concerned with morale in the War Department.
7. During World War I, educational, recreational and welfare services, which formed the basis of morale activities, were carried on mostly by civilian agencies. After the end of the war, however, because of certain serious deficiencies brought to light in a report to the then Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, by Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, who headed

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the civilian agencies, an army branch, concerned with all problems of morale, was formed. This new branch accomplished much in the study of morale problems, and programs necessary to meet them. Many of the established policies on morale in the army are based on the experiences of the original morale branch.

8. In July 1940, coincident with the expansion of the army, a Morale Division, in the Adjutant General's Office, was established. In March 1941, Morale Division was designated Morale Branch, made a War Department special staff section, and placed under the supervision and control of the Chief of Staff of the Army. In January 1942, the Morale Branch was designated as the Special Services Branch, with the dual function of recommending policies and basic aspects of morale, and on recreation, entertainment, welfare, education and athletics. It also administered Army Exchange Service, Army Motion Picture Service, and Library Service.

9. Reorganization at the War Department in March 1943, placed the branch under the Commanding General, Services of Supply. In November 1943, Special Services Division was split, due to the conviction in the War Department that "the psychological approach to the mental attitude of troops, an important factor of morale, could never be satisfactorily handled in the hands of men who were at the same time responsible for the physical recreation."<sup>7</sup> Athletics and recreation were retained in Special Services; army news service, army newspapers, orientation films, army radio service, research work on troop attitudes, and off-duty education program, were transferred to a new division, Morale Services ( redesignated Information and Education Division, August 1944). Subsequently there have been minor changes, but basically these organizations, concerned with morale factors in the War Department, have remained the same.

10. European Theater of Operations, United States Army Morale Agencies. In the European Theater, the Special Services Section first was activated in Headquarters, United States Armed Forces, British Isles (USAFBI), 15 March 1942. In July 1942, Special Services Division, Services of Supply, arrived in the European Theater, and became responsible for all operations and supply, with Special Services, ETOUSA, which headquarters had replaced USAFBI, responsible for theater policy and supervision.

11. This arrangement was unsatisfactory because of overlapping functions, and in March 1943, Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, and Services of Supply, were placed under the Commanding General, Services of Supply, for coordination, supervision, operational control and direction.<sup>8</sup> A further consolidation took place in May 1943, when special services staff sections, along with other special staff sections of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, and Headquarters, Services of Supply, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, were combined as special staff sections of Theater Headquarters.<sup>9</sup>

12. In July 1944, as a result of separation of Special Services and Morale Services in the War Department, a Special Services Division and a Morale Services Division, each with a deputy in charge, were established under the Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army. In October 1944, to indicate more clearly the scope of the Special Services Section, the designation was changed to Special and Information Services.<sup>10</sup>

13. In January 1945, further consideration was given to a complete split between Special Services and Information and Education in the European Theater. A comprehensive study, recommending continuation of

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the policy of one staff section on theater level, in order to maintain close coordination and integration of all morale activities, was submitted to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, by the Chief of Special and Information Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, 4 February 1945.<sup>11</sup> Under date of 4 March 1945, Major General F. H. Osborn, Director, Information and Education Division, War Department, however, in a memorandum to General Eisenhower, recommended the complete separation of Special Services and Information and Education.<sup>12</sup>

14. The recommendation was approved by General Eisenhower, and on 5 April 1945, announcement was made of the establishment of Special Services and Information and Education Division, as separate special staff sections, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, with the following separation of the former activities of Special and Information Services:<sup>13</sup>

### SPECIAL SERVICES

Motion Pictures of Entertainment character.  
Music.  
USO Camp Shows Operations.  
Theatrical.  
Athletics.  
Handicraft.  
Library.  
Special Activities (Facilities).  
Special Services Troops.

### INFORMATION & EDUCATION DIVISION

Education.  
Orientation.  
American Forces Network.  
STARS AND STRIPES.  
YANK Magazine.  
Information.  
Research on Attitudes.

15. Changes in base sections and in the air forces followed those in Theater Headquarters, but in all other subordinate commands, and units, separation of Special Services and Information and Education had been effected by War Department Circular #260, dated 5 September 1944.<sup>14</sup> In actual practice, considerable confusion ensued because of unavoidable delays in the appointment of information and education officers. It was necessary for special services officers to continue certain information and education functions for a considerable period of time.

16. Status of Special Services. From its inception, special services was handicapped by being an emergency service of the army. It lacked the prestige and experienced personnel of an established corps or technical service. The mission of a morale agency is general, and the policies, functions and operating techniques of special services were, of necessity, developed as the war progressed. Accordingly, a lack of understanding of the mission, functions, and potential benefits of special services was widespread. Coordination with many general staff sections was difficult because of the necessity of "selling" the importance of every activity. The effect of this was to complicate the task of special services officers. Even qualified officers were faced with difficult obstacles to the development of an adequate program.

17. Some commanders believed that men were in the army to fight, and that athletics, entertainment and recreation were unnecessary. Others believed that the sole duties of the special services officers consisted of arranging a movie, USO Show, or the distribution of an occasional baseball and bat, or; that an adequate special services program consisted solely in the development of a championship athletic team, outstanding show, band or orchestra. These activities brought publicity to their organization, but were of little value to the overall special services program. In some instances, special services officers were required to provide complete special services programs for headquarters troops, neglecting the far more important phase of special

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services in subordinate units.

18. Administration and Operations. Originally established by the War Department as an administrative service, with only policy making and supervisory functions, it became necessary, as the program developed, for special services at theater, base section, air force, army, corps and division level to engage in many unforeseen activities of an operational nature. Because of the specialized nature of special services supplies, the procurement, warehousing, and distribution of all supplies became the responsibility of respective special services staff sections. In the field of motion pictures, it was necessary to establish exchanges and libraries, down to division level, for the rapid and controlled distribution of motion picture films. Considerable operational duties were required of all staff sections in the procurement, staging, transportation, billeting and messing of USO Camp Shows, and allied civilian entertainment units. Staff sections were ill-fitted to handle such operational functions, but as insufficient special services companies were available, staff sections were forced to assume the responsibility if maximum services were to be rendered. Because of the limited personnel available in staff sections, at all echelons, such operations were often inefficient and subject to much justifiable criticism.

19. It is the general opinion of all consultants, that the special services organization in the European Theater was inadequate to efficiently carry out its mission.<sup>5</sup>

20. Non-Table of Organization Special Services Sections. Grades and ratings for Special Services Sections of theater, base section, reinforcement command and air force headquarters were made available from theater and air force pools. These were limited, and special services, except in the air forces, was severely handicapped in establishing adequate sections for the administration and operation of the many varied activities of the program. Many strong representations were made to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, by the Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, and by representatives of the Special Services Division, Army Service Forces, War Department, for additional personnel.

21. It was not until early in 1945, when it became evident that existing strength could not support the desired special services program in the post-hostilities period, that the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, indicated any appreciation of the serious position of special services sections, and made available additional allotments of grades and ratings. Not only were these made available for headquarters staff sections, but also for provisional table of organization and equipment special services units for entertainment and motion pictures.

22. Table of Organization Special Services Sections. Special Services sections for army, corps, division, regiment and equivalent units were authorized in War Department circulars and letters.<sup>16</sup> With the split between special services and morale services (Information and Education) special services sections were reduced in accordance with War Department Circular #360, Table I, dated 5 September 1944,<sup>14</sup> with the result that the tables of organization of these sections were completely inadequate. This fact is attested to by every officer consulted by the Theater General Board.<sup>15-17</sup>

23. As indicated in paragraph 18, it was the intent of the War Department that the activities of such special services sections, down to division level, would be limited to policy and supervision, with

operations being carried out in subordinate units, but the European Theater special services sections were required to perform certain operational functions necessitating additional personnel. Many commanding officers were aware of the necessity for, and the benefits derived from special services, and the special services staff sections were augmented accordingly by additional officer and enlisted personnel. Others were not so inclined, and the program suffered proportionately.

24. Grades of special services officers of army, corps, divisions, regiments and equivalent units have been the subject of much criticism. While appropriate for the positions as originally envisaged by the War Department, they have not been, during the European campaign, in keeping with the much greater responsibilities which developed.<sup>15</sup>

### SECTION 3

#### PERSONNEL

25. Lack of Qualified Officers. The outstanding deficiency in the organization of special services in the European Theater, has been the lack of qualified officer personnel. Several chiefs of special services sections in the European Theater, were officers who had no previous experience, either in the army or in civilian life, which would qualify them for their assignment.

26. Selection and Appointment. There was no established policy for the selection and appointment of special services officers in the European Theater.<sup>15</sup> Too many special services officers were selected because of their experience as athletes or entertainers, without regard to their other qualifications, either as officers or administrators. It should be noted, however, that the standard of special services officers in the ground forces and air forces was generally higher than in the service forces. With few exceptions the special services officers of armies, corps, divisions and air forces major commands in the European Theater were outstanding.

27. There was no means of retaining qualified officers in special services due to their status as branch immaterial officers. Many fine officers, some graduates of the special services school, were lost to special services through being assigned to other services.

28. Training. The War Department established the Special Services School at Camp Meade, Maryland, later transferred to Lexington, Virginia. Selected officers were given a six weeks course, and then sent to units and overseas theaters. Through the absence of teachers, experienced in overseas operations, the course was more suited to training officers for special services in the Zone of the Interior, but the school did graduate many officers who later proved of great value in the European Theater.

29. Efforts were made by Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, to train newly appointed special services officers in the duties and responsibilities of their assignment, through conferences, touring conference teams, the establishment of schools in certain activities, and the publication of technical manuals. Results of such training were not entirely satisfactory due to the lack of qualified teachers, and the rapid turnover of unit special services officers. Notable exceptions were the successful training of 1,700 athletic officers at the Army Athletic Staff School in Paris in March, April and May 1945, and also 1,300 unit librarians at the School for Unit Librarians, which started in London 2 April 1945, and continued in Paris until July 1945. The European Theater of Operations, United States Army, Special and General Services Guide<sup>4</sup>; the Guide for the Operation of Small Army Libraries,<sup>16</sup>



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and the Plan for Motion Picture Entertainment Program<sup>19</sup> were some of the most useful technical publications of special services in the European Theater, which were of considerable assistance to special services officers.

30. Womens Army Corps. During the latter phases of the European campaign, many WAC officers and enlisted women were integrated into the special services organization with excellent results. After 8 May 1945, a WAC Special Services Company was activated and reports indicate a very successful operation.

### SECTION 4

#### RELATIONS WITH CIVILIAN AGENCIES

31. Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, was concerned mainly with two civilian agencies during the campaign in the European Theater.

a. American Red Cross. In accordance with AR 850-75,<sup>20</sup> American Red Cross was requested by Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, to provide recreational facilities in the form of service clubs, and clubmobiles, such activities to be coordinated through the Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army. This arrangement was not satisfactory, and the coordination of American Red Cross activities in the European Theater was assumed by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, in March 1943. From that time on, Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, had no further official direct contact with the American Red Cross at Theater level. Below Theater level, except in the First United States Army Headquarters, American Red Cross activities were supervised by the special services officers of all commands. The result of the Theater change in the overall policy of the War Department, was the entrance of the American Red Cross into such special services activities as motion pictures, live entertainment, and athletics. Lack of coordination with special services on Theater policy produced much unnecessary duplication of effort, and an inequitable distribution of services.

b. USO Camp Shows Inc. This agency, recognized by the War Department as the only official organization authorized to procure professional entertainment for overseas entertainment, functioned at all times in the European Theater under the direct supervision of the Chief of Special Services. USO Camp Shows Units were shipped by air and surface transportation from the Zone of the Interior, and upon arrival in the European Theater, were handled entirely by special services. The only difficulties in this activity arose from the inability of special services to provide personnel, equipment and facilities for the proper handling of units. This caused some, but not serious, friction between Special Services and USO Camp Shows Inc.

### SECTION 5

#### CONCLUSIONS

32. The General Board concludes that:

a. Sustained development of an adequate special services organization in the European Theater was handicapped through continual changes in policy and organizations of morale agencies of the War Department.

b. The wisdom of the split between Special Services and

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Information and Education Division in the European Theater at a time when post-hostilities planning was nearing completion was questionable. It caused much confusion and misunderstanding in the field and necessitated considerable increases in overall personnel requirements.

c. Principal difficulty in the establishment of Special Services in the European Theater was a lack of understanding and appreciation of the mission, functions and benefits of special services. A proper organization with a status commensurate with its responsibilities is desirable for use in the peace-time army, and to plan for future operations. It is considered essential to place such an agency on a level comparable to that of a technical service and that the personnel be accorded status in a new special services corps.

d. Experience in the European Theater indicates the necessity of a separation between policy and supervisory functions and operations of special services activities. The functions of special services staff sections at all echelons from division level up should be limited to policy, administration, and supervision; with operational functions performed by special services troops. The function of a special services staff officer should include the command of assigned or attached special services troops.

e. The establishment of adequate special services staff sections of theater, base section and reinforcement command headquarters was delayed until 1945 by continued reluctance on the part of responsible officers to make additional grades and ratings available to the Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, United States Army.

f. Tables of organization for special services sections of armies, corps, divisions, were completely inadequate in the light of the operational functions required of staff sections. It was only through augmentation of sections with temporary personnel that special services was able to function as successfully as it did.

g. Lack of qualified officer personnel in special services positions from Theater level down, contributed more than any other factor to a weak overall special services policy and operation.

h. Training of special services officers at the special services school in the Zone of the Interior would have been more comprehensive and suitable, had teachers with overseas experience been assigned to the school. Lack of adequate qualified teacher personnel prevented the establishment of sorely needed training facilities in the European Theater.

i. Necessary qualifications of special services officers are that they be imbued with a desire to serve troops in morale building activities; that officers to fill administrative positions be chosen for their leadership, executive and administrative ability, rather than for their technical or professional background. Officers for branch executive positions should have administrative ability, as well as technical proficiency.

j. The utilization of M.C. personnel in many special services activities is both desirable and advisable. M.C. Special Services Companies should have been activated for use in the European Theater during the campaign.

k. The transfer of active operational coordination of American Red Cross activities from the Chief of Special Services to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, resulted in paralleling of activities and unnecessary duplication of

effort.

1. The policy of USO Camp Shows Inc., operating under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Special Services was sound and resulted in a satisfactory operation. A greater degree of success would have been attained through a better appreciation of the problems involved by the general staff sections of European Theater of Operations, United States Army.

SECTION 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. The General Board recommends that:

a. Consideration be given to according special services a corps status in the permanent military establishment on a level comparable to that of a technical service.

b. The mission and functions of special services staff sections, down to division level, be limited to policy, administration and supervision, as for any other staff section, with all operational responsibilities assigned to special services table of organization and equipment units.

c. Detailed study by appropriate War Department agencies be made of current tables of organization of all special services sections to ensure adequate personnel for the proper fulfillment of their prescribed mission.

d. Further study by appropriate War Department agencies be given to qualifications, methods of selection and the training of special services personnel.

e. A special services school be maintained by the War Department and that courses be continually reviewed to meet changing field conditions

f. Further study be made by appropriate War Department agencies of the possibility of greater use of WAC personnel in all special services activities, including integration in all special services table of organization and equipment units.

g. Special Services assume responsibility for all recreational activities in overseas theaters, now conducted by the American Red Cross, with the exception of Field Service and Hospital Welfare Service.

h. The operation of USO Camp Shows Inc., be continued under the supervision of special services.

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